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ACCOMMODATION FOR ITINERANT VISITORS TO PALMERSTON NORTH

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Geography
at Massey University.

By

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PREFACE

This thesis investigates all accommodation which has operated in Palmerston North and is especially suited for the itinerant visitor.

It is necessary at the outset to define terminologies used within the context of the thesis.

'Itinerant visitors' comprise all those persons who do not live in Palmerston North, and who stay from day to day at an accommodation house in the city.

'Accommodation' for the purpose of this thesis comprises all those buildings in Palmerston North whose business is to provide overnight lodging for the itinerant visitor at any time during the year. This accommodation comprises all private and licensed hotels, motels, motor hotels and camping ground cabins.

'Private Hotels' are defined by the fourth schedule of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 1960 and Ordinance 1, Clause 3 of the Code of Ordinances as being 'a residential building not being a licensed hotel in which board¹ and lodging² is provided for five or more lodgers for reward or payment.'

'Licensed Hotels' provide the same services as the Private Hotel, but have the additional service of a publican's licence issued under the Licensing Act, 1908.

'Motels' are defined by the fourth schedule of the Town and Country Planning Regulations, 1960, and Ordinance 1, Clause 3 of

the Code of Ordinances as being 'land and one or more buildings principally for the day to day accommodation of travellers by road and their vehicles, and includes as accessory to the principal use, any service or amenities provided on the site such as fuelling of vehicles, shops, restaurants, bathrooms, bathhouses and swimming pool, playgrounds and the like.'

However, this definition of a motel could also be applicable to some licensed and private hotels, and to give the term 'motel' a more defined application the Ministry of Works³ have suggested the following requirements for motels:

- '1. Accommodation units which are self-contained in respect of entrance, bedsitting room (including linen), bathroom, and toilet facilities.
2. At least one off-street parking space adjacent to each unit for guests, with adequate additional facilities for visiting vehicles.
3. Either a breakfast service, served by management in units or adjacent restaurant (serviced motel), or individual cooking and dining facilities in each unit (a terminal motel).
4. Adequate grounds suitably landscaped and planted.'

It should be a pre-requisite before any classification as a motel that these four requirements be met, although in special circumstances where the site is restrictive, Council may reduce the extent of landscaped and planted grounds.

Although there is no definition for 'Motor Hotel' in the Town and Country Planning Regulations, 1960, or the Code of Ordinances; where motel accommodation also has a publican's licence issued under the Licensing Act, 1908, the accommodation may be classified as a 'Motor Hotel'. The accommodation units of the motor hotel may either be included in the licensed premises or else retained as unlicensed premises.

Source material for the thesis required investigations into archives and histories, local body regulations and records, and the results from two questionnaires. The local hotels of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were consistent advertisers in the Manawatu Standard and the Daily Times newspapers and extensive use was made of the accommodation advertisements for information on hotel ownership, location and services provided. Unfortunately, a fire in the 1920s destroyed all official copies of pre-1900 newspapers, and consequently, nineteenth century editions were difficult to locate. The regular accommodation advertisements ceased to appear in editions after 1920, and it was not until half way through the last decade that there has been a reappearance of accommodation advertisements in the city newspaper. A street survey of Palmerston North conducted in 1896 by J.D. Climie of the Lands and Survey Department proved invaluable in determining the location of accommodation at the turn of the century.

Two separate questionnaires were administered during the course of the thesis preparation. In October, 1969 all the 24 accommodation companies operating in the city at that time were personally interviewed and a separate questionnaire was completed for

each accommodation company (Appendix A). In April, 1970 a pilot questionnaire was administered to 30 guest groups staying at 5 accommodation houses in the city. The results of this pilot survey were of assistance in compiling the main guest group⁴ questionnaires which were administered in August and September, 1970. The distribution of these questionnaires was on the basis of two questionnaires to each licensed and private hotel bedroom and two questionnaires to each motel, motor hotel and camping ground unit. A computer was used to total and correlate the results of correctly completed questionnaires from 250 guest groups (Appendix B).

Photographs of accommodation houses were not included in this thesis because it was felt that photographs alone would be self evident and serve no constructive purpose unless they were accompanied by critical comment, both favourable and otherwise. Even without naming the accommodation, the photograph would enable instant recognition of the particular company and such critical comment could adversely affect the business of either the accommodation referred to or their competitors. Similarly, no reference was made in the thesis to the trade name of any accommodation company where any critical evaluation was being made, and no reference was made to individual occupancy rates, as such information is confidential to each accommodation company.

Footnotes:

- 1 'Board'. The provision of daily meals.
- 2 'Lodging'. The provision of hired room(s) for residing. A guest house and boarding house can be included in this category.
- 3 Ministry of Works bulletin.
- 4 'Guest group' refers to the number of persons in each private party staying at an accommodation house.

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I would like to thank the Palmerston North City Council and the Palmerston North Public Library for allowing me access to records which proved most valuable in the compilation of data. My thanks also to the staff of the computer unit at Massey University for their assistance in programming the guest group questionnaire.

I am indebted to the management of the accommodation companies who all proved most willing and co-operative in their response to my interview questionnaire. Similarly, I am very appreciative of the 250 guest groups who completed a visitor questionnaire.

My grateful thanks to Mrs. Diane Harrod for drafting the three maps, Mr. John Francis for advice in compiling the guest questionnaire, Mr. Murray McKenzie for printing the copy, and Mrs. Rama McGee for typing the script.

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INTRODUCTION

There is growing realisation of a definite need for an investigation into all aspects of itinerant accommodation not only in Palmerston North but throughout New Zealand. In a public address at Palmerston North on 29 May, 1969, the then Deputy Manager for the Tourist and Publicity Department, Mr. John Hartstonge, stated that due to a lack of factual information there has been far too much generalisation in comments on all aspects of accommodation. Mr. Hartstonge considered the type of facts needed were studies on the historic evolution and growth of accommodation in New Zealand leading to an investigation of the present day accommodation situation. Such a study he felt can provide the means for the planning of accommodation for the future. Further realisation for the need for an investigation into accommodation came from Recommendations to the National Development Conference by the Tourist Committee at the Second Plenary Session in May, 1969. The report stated (p. 41) 'The Committee stresses the importance of research for establishing data for planning and is concerned at the current serious shortage of tabulated facts.' The Committee stressed the need for basic data on markets, visitors, attitudes and expectations.

Palmerston North celebrates its first 100 years as an established settlement in 1970. This Centennial Year is an appropriate time to examine itinerant accommodation in Palmerston North from 1870 to 1970.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, and following is a resume of each chapter as it appears in the text.

Chapter One traces the development and location of itinerant accommodation in the town from its beginnings, through successive years to 1970, and reveals the factors which have influenced its rate of development and location pattern during the century of accommodation in Palmerston North.

Chapter Two examines the regulations which are applicable in the location, siting, and building of accommodation houses in the city, and relates these regulations to the accommodation site layouts existing today.

Chapter Three investigates the present day characteristics of guest groups who stay at accommodation houses in Palmerston North and reveals the impact of accommodation on the city.

The final chapter examines possible ways to attract an increasing number of itinerant visitors to the city by revealing the city's present limitations and assets, and investigating the existing visitor attractions which could be further developed, and the possible new amenities which could be introduced to attract more itinerant guests to stay in Palmerston North in the future.